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Sketch of Camden, New Jersey.

A. D. 1813-1873.

A SKETCH
OF
CAMDEN CITY,
NEW JERSEY.

WITH A VIEW TO BUSINESS.

By a Looker-On.

CAMDEN, N. J.
Bonsall & Carse, Federal Street,
1873.

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PREFACE.

This "Sketch" is barely one in chalk, if not in charcoal; the hand, however, is that of an eye-witness, who knows whereof he doth testify.

The sleeping energies of Camden need but a hearty nudge or two to awaken them. Let the next Looker-on do his share, and the sluggard will at length arise in earnest.

DEDICATION.

Gen. George B. Carse,
United States Army.

Twelve years ago, when you pressed to the front at the call of your country, made through its chosen agent, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, patriot and martyr, you opened a volume of new experience which was thus thrust upon you. Every parallel of latitude, if not every new mile, as you marched southward, presented something of change in man and his works; keeping to the common central characteristics it is true, but branching into curious diversity. There you found—not only buried, forgotten, but also undreamed of, plain fireside comforts to which you were

born. The love of luxury lingering, nay rampant there; its means of gratification within call yet practically out of reach. A sort of general crying for the moon existing, and which was content to cry on. Until, when at length you drove your tent-pins into the almost unresisting soil of Florida, and turned from the fading sunset to the north star for the first time, you might have exclaimed—Surely I have passed over much that is hard to believe, but never to be forgotten!

Returned once more to your starting point, after a triumph the most signal in all the annals of war, the habit of improvement which you applied abroad, should follow you like your shadow in all after life. Wherever you pitch your tent, no second winter should settle on barren brambles around it; and though the soft lawn grass may not spring up in the first night, the former sod must be broken up and better seed put in, knowing it will be bread some coming day.

In the periodical press you have a power

to affect society greater than that of all the artillery in Christendom. Let us hope that our battle flags are furled for ever; or, only to be spread, in contrast with their former use, around the grand triumphal arch on which shall be inscribed, "He is most illustrious who is most useful!"

To assist you humbly but heartily in an attempt toward such a consummation, is the desire of

THE AUTHOR.

SKETCH OF CAMDEN,

NEW JERSEY.

PART FIRST.

IN old Diedrich Knickerbocker's celebrated history of New York, as presented by Washington Irving, we find the writer, before entering on his obvious task as historian of that city, piling up labored statements to prove that, first, this world had been created, and second, that our hemisphere of it had been discovered. I have never been satisfied as to the authorship of that whim; and am still in doubt whether we should credit it to the simplicity of the old Dutchman, or charge it to the complicity of his waggish

translator and editor. Either of them was equal to its production. But I have formed thus much of a conclusion concerning the matter that I shall not follow the example there set, but shall assume that all the indispensable prerequisites to my subject (embracing at least creation and discovery) have been secured, and ask my readers to step confidently with me upon that silicious peninsula, bounded by Cooper's Creek and the Delaware River and named Camden, as a fixed fact—a terrene axiom not to be disputed.

In the war of our Revolution this town does not seem to have been distinguished. Indeed, Dr. Mulford, in his ample and exact "History of New Jersey," fails to name Camden once; but, while in the act of closing his classic volume in disappointment if not in despair, I found that he had actually dated his preface at the very place which had been sought for in vain in his text; thus

making some amends for previous silence by lifting up his voice to our purpose, even after he had uttered his last word as historian.

Within the memory of men now living, it was usual to speak of the whole territory as "the Jerseys;" which plural appellative was ever a stumbling block in our early grammar exercises. Dr. Mulford, however, removes this obstruction with a few touches of his fluent pen.

It seems that quite early in its history, the entire tract of country known at present as the State of New Jersey, was granted by its royal claimant the Duke of York, to John Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, two noblemen of wealth and fame, who proceeded to divide the same between them; calling the upper portion, or that nearest to New York, "East Jersey," and the lower one, "West Jersey." Hence, for a century at least, it bore something of a duplex standing in history; and though the boundary line

was never critically defined or insisted on, it gave excuse for the otherwise odd nomenclature mentioned above.

Into this lower portion as thus designated, some very desirable emigrants soon entered. A party of Swedes took up lands near to the present Swedesborough; and farther up the Delaware, say between Gloucester and Burlington, those friends of peace, the disciples of George Fox, under the countenance of Robert Barclay and William Penn, presented their sober array.

Both of these parties came to cultivate the soil, and to eat of the fruit of their labor; and to a great extent they succeeded:

“Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

Nor did this mild ambition pass utterly away with them. The fashion of unobtrus-

ive usefulness there and then set up is not quite banished from its neat farms. The drab coat (whose color seemed to have been adopted in emulation of that of the roadbed) has deepened into the soft olive or dark brown; and the sheltering bonnet on mother and daughter resists the pinched saucer and pattypan of the milliner, and the graceful, majestic skirt defies, ay spurns the hideous "Grecian bend!"

THREESCORE YEARS AGO.

Failing to discover any memorable mention of Camden in our Revolutionary era—not a single “toot” from Fame’s trumpet about her, we shall find her peaceful record furnish dull materials wherewith to raise a huzzah in these piping times of flaunting flags and spread eagles.—“It’s hard to make a silken purse out of a *sou*’s ear” say the Scotch: even so; but we shall not promise either silk or velvet, but say, if there is nothing better, there shall be nothing worse than good homespun.

Taking our stand in Christ Church steeple in Philadelphia, about the close of the war of 1812, we have a tolerable chance for getting what artists call a “bird’s eye view” of the opposite Jersey shore. From above

the range of Vine street southward to the line of the Navy Yard, the river front of Camden presented a gentle concave curve measuring about two miles.

This entire region might be said to answer to the name of COOPER. Had "Whistling Bob" (a noted African oysterman of that day) stood beside us, and in his splendid tenor voice called out, "Friend Cooper!" at any time of day or year, the placable Quaker "Anan!" would have come back across the broad Delaware most certainly.

The prevalence of this name in that neighborhood has often attracted the attention of the inquisitive, in the past hundred years. It has been partly explained by the fact that a person embraced in Penn's group of original settlers actually bore that unostentatious patronymic; but some ingenious etymologists on the western shore have insisted on associating it with the unfailing supply of tough *hoop-poles* for which this part of our continent was so long celebrated. Whether the

original Cooper, in noble pride of his craft, planted himself among the hoops, or the hoops (by natural "evolution") rose around the Cooper, we shall not stop to determine; sufficient for us that, in leaving them together, we consider each in good company.

THE CROPS.

The landscape here offered to our view could hardly be called striking. The primitive forest marked the horizon a short mile distant from the shore. As we looked eastward in winter we thought of pine wood and pork; the latter mostly in the "comminuted" condition of sausage-meat. In summer, green peas, cucumbers, musk-melons, water-melons, and sweet potatoes presented their varied claims to attention, and were duly honored; though crowned and eventually crowded out by that of the incomparable peach, which, at the price of a "fi'penny-bit a ha' peck" dis-

tanced all competition and clearly overcrowded all other "cries."

We step back in plain justice to the vernacular of that period, to translate into it a few of the items above. The melons were offered and accepted as "mush-millions" and "water-millions," (perhaps owing to the number of seeds contained in them;) and the cucumbers were known as "cow-comers" doubtless because no sensible cow could be induced to swallow one of them!

These varied products of "Jersey sand-bank" were brought to market in a style of chariot never yet celebrated in song; indeed the only music ever connected with them was that of their own creaking wheels, four of which were set up and connected in the most frugal manner, and on which was laid a structure like a carpenter's work-bench turned upside down; two broad boards held perpendicularly on their edges by hickory pins, forming the sides, and several other

boards, ranged flatly between these, making the bottom of the wagon; with a front and tail-board of the same lowly pattern. These bottom boards were not of uniform length, one or two projecting a foot or more beyond the others at the tail-board—evincing the hearty contempt of the builder for technical niceties, and thus presenting a tempting seat to stray boys ambitious of a ride under any circumstances.

The “moving force” of these vehicles consisted of a couple of quadrupeds called (by courtesy perhaps) horses, whose main distinction lay in their difference of color; a peculiarity never sufficiently accounted for, but so nearly invariable in practice as to cause such a piebald team in Pennsylvania to be styled a “Jersey match.” It has been hinted that this contrast of color was intended to assist the main parties concerned as to the actual *count* of the cattle; as otherwise the owner (from the slight force exerted and the moderate allowance of oats provided)

might be undecided in the estimate of his "horse-power." It was useful also at the ferry, whose rates were almost exclusively determined by the number of horses; the load being treated as of secondary importance, and the driver literally "thrown in" as not worth naming in the estimate!

THE NEW ITEM.

This short catalogue of "marketing" had bounded alike the ambition of the farmer and the cravings of the citizen for a century. We have already glanced at the dark background of woods which met us in Jersey. Its produce did not rate very high as timber; and even as firewood, with plenty of white-heart hickory, barren oak and white oak, it was far from the level of a staple article in trade. But "nothing is made in vain" says the proverb; which was found in the fullness of time to apply even here.

About the date of George Washington's death, there came to Philadelphia a Scotchman who had been trained to the trade and mystery of a "potter"—Abraham Miller by name. He proposed to serve the community in the particular of family earthenware, and he succeeded to the decided satisfaction of both parties. He cast his lot for life in Penn's city, facing the extremes of its climate invincibly but not insensibly. He knew well that our dinners did not jump upon the table without help, nor get that help without hands; and in the true spirit of his mother he pitied the whole sisterhood of our cooks during the months of June, July and August, and in their special behalf he contrived a sort of fire-clay bucket, as a portable furnace, to be heated by *charcoal!*

THE SPELL OF THE POTTER.

The ancients, on questions of deep moment, had a habit of consulting the "birds;" had our potter submitted the "constitutionality" of his furnace to the commonwealth of crows which, beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, had roosted in those pines, (and those same thieving birds been half as wise as they are cunning,) they would have "cawed" back such a protest as would have deafened the adventurous Scotchman. But he was not one of the ancients. He meant to help the Philadelphia cooks, and extend his business, and he did not raise any more noise about the affair than was necessary.

Up to this period, that ill-defined territory so literally condemned to the shade, had stood in our history much as the Zahara does

to the northern coast of Africa, along which fertile margin the vagrant sons of Ishmael spread themselves, and tested their individual daring by incursions into the ever-forbidding Desert. And thus, in the graphic language of the late Joseph W. Cooper—
“Early purchasers in our part of Jersey generally bargained for a certain breadth of river front, and then were allowed to run their lines back into the ‘pine-barrens’ *about as far as they had a mind to!*”

But henceforth mark the change. In the grasp of sly Abraham those pine-barrens became “as clay in the hands of the potter!” At his bidding they did not quite put on flesh; they became black diamonds, however; and with a little punning privilege, we might say, he caused a movement in “Burn’em-Wood” such as neither Shakespear nor Macbeth ever dreamed of! The house-keepers of Philadelphia showed themselves to be of one mind for once, and bought said

furnaces and called for charcoal; and lo, from the "vasty deep" of the pines they were answered, not by spirits, but by veritable "Carbonari," ready to serve them with the one thing needful in the case.

Thus arose the Jersey charcoal trade; introducing an additional item of home produce which never asked for protection or promotion through the Tariff. No letters-patent gave monopoly to the manufacturers, who, safe in their native shadows, feared no intrusion, and issued into sunshine sure of a warm reception.

It has never transpired as to what premium was offered for the best form of vehicle for bringing the coal to the consumer. It is plain that the one adopted was modeled upon the plan of the feed-trough of those submissive horses already alluded to; with a short piece in the tail-board, or a like hole in the side of the wagon, suggested by the front

door of a chicken house, wherein to insinuate a shovel for unloading.

Rude as this business might seem to a spectator wearing white kid gloves, it embraced among its practisers genuine artists in the original sense of the word. In filling the wagon, the best specimens of well-burnt oak were consciously (if not conscientiously) reserved for the topping-off layer. Then, the whole township was searched for the most shrunken specimen of a "barl" to serve as a measure; and ever and anon, in filling the same, a convenient two-foot piece would stick fast at an angle about equally diverse from the horizontal and the perpendicular, forming a cavernous vacuity that helped to pay the ferryage!

Why are these metaphorical vacillations of our charcoal men cited? Merely to scout the abominable "monkey" theory now so fashionable, as applied to them who, though

coming direct from the fraternity of the 'possums and woodchucks, presented undeniable credentials of human nature, and thus might claim affinity with the rest of the fa-family on the Pennsylvania shore, some of whose prominent members plied short yardsticks in Second street, or sold stony coffee in Market street. Ahem !

Within the embrace of the past threescore years, a ferry was attempted at the present site of Gloucester city, to communicate with Greenwich Point opposite ; and doubtless several " original invoices " of charcoal thus crossed the river, and found entrance to the city along the once celebrated Point House Road, which picked its level way through the marsh, barely a foot above the spring tides, and debouched through Greenwich street upon " old " Second street. The main supply of the coveted carbon, however, came by South street ferry ; at length, emboldened


by the large demand, the wagons ventured to climb Market street hill.

Notwithstanding this outlay of daring, our charcoal men found themselves even here barely on the verge of their speculative Canaan. They were familiar with the water's edge region only, and the city had already become a world of streets and houses. But our friend the old potter still watched the whole field with the eye of Blucher himself; and so he induced the city councils to appoint a locality as a charcoal mart. For this purpose they set apart Dock street from the place of the old Drawbridge up to the line of Second street. This is Penn's sole "serpentine" street, and these sons of the sandbank coiled themselves into it with an alacrity that seemed to admit its accordance with their own long-accustomed ways! Its width allowed two or even three wagons to stand abreast. In the morning, the tall houses on the eastern side warded off the sunshine; in

the afternoon the men hid in the shadow of their wagons. It was at once their Rialto and their Academic Grove; where those swarthy brethren alternately walked or sat, in seeming imitation of the rival schools of Plato and Aristotle!

Besides its appalling extent westward, the city stood closely built up on Front street and Second street, all the way from the Navy Yard up to "Pegg's Run." Much of this tract was too distant to allow its residents to run to the Drawbridge for their charcoal, and no adventurous merchant had as yet the courage to invest in a wagon load, with a view to serving his neighbors by retail. Hence it was hinted that our charcoal men should break the monotony of their exile by "hawking" their merchandise from door to door. A couple of progressive souls acting on this suggestion, made a raid up and down Second street one day, obtaining fabulous prices, and escaping safely with their

cash avails to the other side of the Delaware. Still the aversion of a Jerseyman to turn a square corner, or follow even a straight line any distance, restricted the trade to narrow limits.

 [This perverse tendency to *linear aberration* still haunts Camden, even to its latest authorized avenue. About a couple of squares seems to be the limit of her right lined course. After proceeding that distance, the target man instinctively shies off to the left or the right, as if he had one day sold a short barrel of charcoal to some one living right ahead!]

JAMIE CHARCOAL.

At length a very Joshua appeared, whose appointed mission seemed to be to lead the charcoal men clear through the Promised Land. He came in the shape of a five-foot high blacksmith, from the north of Ireland. James was his baptismal name, and in his first day's service, as pioneer of Jerseymen, he was surnamed "charcoal," which stuck to him henceforth through life.

Jamie Charcoal had a most progressive dislike of hard work; but he knew all about coal, and could find any spot in Philadelphia either by day or night. So he offered his services at the charcoal exchange in the mixed capacity of usher and supercargo, to

the dingy custodians of this new summer fuel, who, after crossing the Rubicon of the Delaware, were still halting on the threshold of their fortunes. The bargain was soon struck, and a change followed.

Jamie armed himself with a tin trumpet, and at each street corner, and at varying intervals in our long squares, he gave a blast that secured attention from great and small, followed by the cry of "char-r-r coal," to which was added a couplet or two of doggerel song, setting forth its virtues and its cheapness.

For the time, the stolid city seemed to wake up. The good housewives learned to know Jamie, not only at first sight, but even before they saw him; they heard his clarion announcement, and got the alley gate or cellar door open in advance. In fact the enterprise might be said to run through the town like the literal wildfire of its commodity

when kindled under the pot. Miller sold his furnaces, and the favored wagoners whom Jamie took in tow, sold out their entire cargoes by noon, in time to deposit their cash before the bank closed. And our hero found himself rapidly dividing public fame and favor, with even General Jackson and Colonel Pluck.

But here we might well fall back upon Robert Burns's warning about the "best laid schemes o' mice an' men." It came to pass that our trumpeter, in his indiscriminate enthusiasm, waked up more than his customers. There proved to be in Philadelphia divers men, and even women, whose chief business in life was to *eat their meals*; and how these were produced or earned (much less cooked) was knowledge too mighty for them! Whether a cook was roasted each day along with the dinner, they neither knew nor cared; sufficient for them to find a succession of both as time rolled on. These were just

the people also to sleep late in the morning, and take a nap after dinner; and Jamie's hearty summons was to them a real startling reproach; it spoke of life and usefulness abroad entirely above their level—a standard of true stature entirely beyond their lazy stretch.

There were others, too—the quiet and the sick, whom this tin music really afflicted; none more than our worthy drab colored Friends, who always associate the sound of the trumpet with a scarlet coat if not with blood. The furnace maker also was of peaceful temper, and declined the assistance of the noise; and complaint was made to the city authorities, and an ordinance was duly prepared, in the most approved circumlocution of the official legal scribe, and passed, forbidding the nuisance.

Of this proceeding Jamie was made acquainted, and after several warnings by more

than one constable, he was at length arrested and taken before the mayor.

The sturdy culprit made no boggling in the matter, such as pleading not guilty. He was taken *flagrante delicto*, and marched into court with his trumpet stuck in his ample breeches' pocket, somewhat in the style of a dress sword.

"James," said the judge, "I am sorry to see you here. Why do you raise this noise?"

"Plase yer honor," answered Jamie, "just to let the wimmin know that we are coming wid the coal sure!"

"But you know it is against the law, and it disturbs the whole town," rejoined the magistrate.

Jamie was of the true blue Presbyterian church whose members always have a Scrip-

ture text or inference at hand; and in a sharp tone he half answered, half inquired—

“An’ if my little hor-r-n plagues ’em so, how will they stand the last great trumpet?”

And he stared earnestly at the judge, his red nose projecting between his sooty cheeks like the bill of a poker just drawn from an anthracite fire.

The magistrate was one who brought to the bench that impressive sort of “weight” which was so highly prized among the early Dutch aldermen of New York, and Jamie’s reply (which might be characterized as both pertinent and pert) seemed to move him almost off his cushion. He rolled towards the accused with something of the cumbrous grace of a mammoth walrus on a mud bank, and in a kindly tone counselled him to lay by his horn. He must fine him, he said, but

he named the lowest sum possible under the indictment.

Jamie would have swallowed almost any given amount of good advice, that being an article which was as familiar to him as his old mother's face; but this appeal to his purse presented a dose against which both head and stomach revolted.

“And must I pay the money, yer honor?” asked he.

“Yes, here and now,” said the magistrate, sternly.

Slowly he drew out that grimy buckskin pouch, the invariable companion of his race, which opens to receive money as easily as a roasted oyster does to the knife, but which snaps shut upon its prey with the angry vigor of the trigger of a revolver!

He paid his fine and went his way for the time, quieted for once ; while his Honor adjourned the court ; the assembly retiring with unwonted gravity, evidently impressed with the charcoal man's allusion to the great final assize—that tribunal to which so few lawyers are apt to appeal!

In a few days, however, our irrepressible trader was heard from afresh. He had bartered off his trumpet, with some of his black diamonds to boot, for a hand-bell, and he rang all the changes possible thereon through court and alley, and shouted charcoal afresh to the alternate delight and dismay of his hearers. Now not one disciple of the realm of "red tape," would assert that a statute drawn against a horn would be effective against a bell ; so the routine of petition and remonstrance had to be travelled anew, while Jamie like a comet was flying around in his eccentric orbit, leaving his pursuers hopelessly behind!

But there were opposing forces at work on the side of peace and quietness which the prosecuting attorney never dreamed of.

Blacksmiths are proverbial for the lodgement of a "spark in the throat;" and Jamie was too spirited a craftsman to blink any of the staple requirements of his trade. He also had a remarkably keen recollection of every tavern he had ever visited, and a talent at new discoveries in the same longitude that would have been invaluable to either Mungo Park or Dr. Livingstone. To change the figure a little, we might say that he was like certain avaricious sailing masters, who sometimes pile on more cargo than they can bring safely to port. And thus it would come to pass, that the pilot of the morning occasionally stood sadly in need himself of a guide before sunset. This gave rise to sundry disputes about commissions and salvage; the Jersey men contending that if Jamie charged for steering them out, it was worth some-

thing to tow him home! Besides, after several seasons' training, the wagoners became able to find their own way through town; and to pay for anything which they could get for nothing, was no trait of theirs. Thus, our once sturdy pioneer found his occupation decline. Even the sun must set as well as rise; so he slipped gently down life's western slope, and joined the great "unreturning caravan." But a bell like his own is still tinkling while I write, over the remains of the charcoal trade in the streets of Philadelphia.

ADDITIONAL NAMES.

FELLOWS AND FOLLOWERS OF THE COOPERS.

Within our allotted limits of time and space, besides (and by the side of) the ubiquitous Cooper, a few other names quietly present themselves, not asking but deserving notice:—BROWNING, HATCH, HEYL, FETTERS, KAIGHN, MICKLE, MULFORD.

CITIZEN BROWNING

Established a public house and ferry near the foot of the present Market street, but its “slip” must have stood a thousand feet inland from the ample landing of the West

Jersey Ferry Company now succeeding it. The boats (of horse or steam-power) varied their place of arrival on the Philadelphia side, between Poplar street and Arch street.

Mr. Browning also cultivated a clever truck farm situated a short distance up the famous Cooper's Creek. The ferry house was considered commodious and well-kept for the times, and the shady garden attached was much resorted to in warm weather by residents of the hot, red brick city opposite.

The present ferry company (West Jersey) was mainly founded by his children, who, numerous and well known, hold a marked standing in the present generation.

FARMER HATCH.

This sturdy truckman had made a lodgement on one of the most desirable tracts of land embraced in Camden limits. His farm occupied the southern shore of the wide channel of the Delaware river, opposite to Petty's Island, running from the eastern line of the Cooper's Point farm to the mouth of Cooper's Creek, and embracing its western shore for a short distance.

Its entire water front was covered with comparatively large trees, and at the mouth of the creek and adjacent thereto was an extensive flat, submerged in winter but covered with reeds or wild rice in late summer. Various native game abounded there; embracing in autumn Reed Birds, Swamp Black Birds, and even River Ducks, and in winter

robins and squirrels. These attracted hoards of sportsmen who, starting with the general assumption of being in a free country, and enlarging their privileges thus inferred to limits almost undefined, they annoyed the whole region. This intrusion was resisted most ferociously by farmer Hatch. He kept quite a garrison of fierce dogs, and did not hesitate to "bear arms," not only in self-defence, but in clearing his territory of trespassers.

The regular navigation of the creek was confined to the passage of a few market boats bringing produce from the farms lying up the stream; and, thus threatened and defended, the mouth of Cooper's Creek was almost as unknown to the general traveller as the mouth of the Niger!

Under the depredations of the gunners thus alluded to, a statute was enacted forfeiting the firearms of all such intruders on private

property; and the rude assertion of this penalty caused the death of a son of the subject of this article, less than twenty years ago.

This farm is now bounded southerly by quite a miniature village of neat dwellings, put up in connexion with a large woollen mill, to accommodate the hands there employed. This factory has a side front on State street, and a fine wharf and eastern front on Cooper's Creek; it stands on an eminence—a "bluff" in fact, and, compared with the usual level of the country, holds a most eligible position.

VICTUALIER HEYL.

Whoever frequented the market house extending from Front street to Second street, in the middle of Market street, Philadelphia, at the times now under remembrance, must have noted the fine array of fixtures and goods of the celebrated pork dealer Heyl of Camden. Embracing a long array of cedar tubs painted blue and lettered "Heyl" in red capitals.

What Hudibras's "Talgol" was among the beeves, surely stout neighbor Heyl was among the swine. Pork in all its varied phases—from the whole carcass to the finely chopped fat and lean meat stuffed in transparent casings and linked together by the

yard, was displayed on his capacions stalls; along with finest leaf lard in corn-husk wrappers, and the softer article in metal buckets.

The genuine "Jersey sausage" was a favorite item at Philadelphia winter breakfasts; and was distinguished both for quality and style. The meat was good pork, seasoned principally with fine garden sage, and stuffed in the narrow intestines of the sheep; thus, from their smaller diameter, they cooked more readily than the thicker "butcher" article, and had a tasteful, lady-finger look.

His extensive "works" stood about on the line of the present Market street, Camden; whence his sterling stock was sent almost daily across the river; in severe frost using even a sleigh for transport.

As a judge of meat, and a skilful handler of the same, Mr. Heyl had scarcely an equal.

His movements at the stall were so apt and easy as to be really graceful. He did not wear the full frock of the profession, but had the whitest of aprons, and over-sleeves drawn on his brown coat, and buttoned at the wrist.

In later years a large pleasure garden was established by some of his descendants, occupying several acres of ground near the centre of the city, which became quite a popular resort.

RICHARD FETTERS.

Strolling southward toward the old limits of the town-plot, we come upon what seems to be almost a distinct settlement. The surface is hardly above the high-water level of the Delaware, and its tenements and town lots vary in size and shape, as if intended to suit all applicants for the same—in fact to be so accommodating as to leave but scanty accommodations when put to the test.

This stray hamlet is known as “Fettersville,” introducing to us the citizen whose name heads the present article; and whose rise and progress may well be associated with that of Camden.

Born to the noble inheritance, and the still nobler habits, of useful industry, he served a

long apprenticeship to several laborious avocations; settling eventually upon that of a gardener and florist. He evidently had a natural talent for the cultivation of plants, and the same cheapness of soil which enabled him to cover a large surface at small cost, gave ample yards to his neighbors, among whom his flower crops found ready sale. He also sent some of his rare specimens to the "city," as Philadelphia was invariably designated.

His habits were as frugal as Stephen Girard's; and his general history, though stretching over a smaller sphere, reads much like that of the great merchant.

This village of Fetersville arose in this wise. The level of the land was low, and the cost of the property to him was proportioned accordingly. It lay comparatively adjacent to the lower ferry which sent its boats to

South street, Philadelphia, through which intercourse the region became known.

Now Richard was not restricted in his dealings by narrow views about either the clime or complexion of purchasers; and a number of colored persons bought town lots in his tract, and "improved" the same in a style which rather strained the literal meaning of that promising word. But an acre of ground "cut up" to better account in this way, than when laid out in market truck; and the humble African here got something of a humble home, safe from the oppression and contamination of white-faced neighbors on the Pennsylvania side of the river, whose inner surface was blacker than his own!

Thus both "the parties of the first part," as the conveyancers have it, seemed satisfied, and left those who might follow them, either to "fall in and keep step," or keep their distance.

In latter years Richard rose to civic honors and weight though small in stature. As school director and bank director he served with fidelity if not with dignity. His latest mansion, with its wreath of "Wistaria," sets a sound example to the neighborhood, of a comfortable dwelling; and the sale of his large collection of plants went far to give him a fragrant remembrance.

His acquirements in "book learning" were but moderate; his main choice of reading keeping in the botanical line. Sometimes the classical name of a plant cost him more effort to ascertain and pronounce, than the propagation of forty layers or seedlings from the same; but when the coveted orthography and prosody were at last attained, even the cash price of the article seemed secondary to these for a time; visitors of the greenhouse and garden being dosed with the mangled Greek, whether they bought the plant, or bowed themselves out of hearing.

His inexpensive habits of living have been already alluded to. His chosen costume was that of a working man, preferring a style of clothing which nearly defied the worst of weather. After his wealth had actually thrust public trust upon him, some laughable instances occurred of candidates mistaking Richard for his latest wheelbarrow man.

Among them we may mention the case of an aspirant for a place to the acquisition of which the old florist's vote was indispensable. He was sought at home and at the court-house, and was at length tracked into his nursery. The young gentleman in broad-cloth inquired of the first person he met—

“Is this Mr. Fetters's place?”

“Yes,” answered a small man half covered with compost.

“Is he in?” proceeded the inquirer.

“He is,” replied the same imperturbable man of clay.

“Can I see him?” added the anxious candidate.

“Guess you’ll hardly have a better chance,” replied Richard, “for I’m him—but you’ll have to wait till I finish potting these here *jeuranyums*!

Adieu, old knight of the spade and rose-tree! Among his generation, we might say, “many worse, better few” than he.

Will you be so good

KAIGHN'S POINT KAIGHN.

On the sunward boundary of the town which we are surveying historically, just on the southern horn of that crescent which we drew topographically on its front at the outset—a name appears of rather occult orthography, viz. Kaighn, and pronounced most suspiciously like that of the fugitive son of Adam!

The immediate date of his advent has not been found, but traces of his presence can be identified within the past century. Kaighn's Point soon became the point aimed at by explorers from old Southwark and the lower part of the city proper, who had the courage

or curiosity to cross the Delaware in search of "fresh fields and pastures new."

Sandy and sunburnt the country spread around in summer, drinking greedily all the crystal tribute of the sky, from the smallest dew drop to the plunging globules of the northwest thundergust. And in winter, as Campbell says of Hohenlinden, "all boundless lay the untrodden snow," occasionally broken by the track of a wood sled, as the grounds near the "point" were sometimes used as a depot for firewood, which, when the river became frozen sufficiently firm, was carried across on light sleds to the Southwark landings, especially to that at foot of Almond street.

A couple of venerable two-story dwellings stood on the line of the river road (the present Second street,) having two or three very large box-wood trees and two dwarf yew trees in front of them. The trees were

acknowledged as the oldest "living inhabitants" of the region, at the beginning of the current century, and how far backward from that time their birth or planting dated, even tradition is silent.

The present "avenue" ran eastwardly not above one-third of a mile, in a tolerably right line, but following the invariable "bent" of Camden surveys, it then deflected as old Brace Road, to the only bridge over Cooper's Creek. About twenty-five years ago, by a most notable stroke of courage, this avenue (or Main Street then called) was opened eastward, and entered the Haddonfield turnpike road just at its first toll-gate from Camden. This should have added perceptibly to the business of the ferry, whose position directly opposite to the Philadelphia Navy Yard, with a channel unobstructed by island or shoal, surpasses in natural advantages any other thus far established.

As early as 1816, a steamboat plied from foot of South street, Philadelphia, to said Kaighn's Point; where several members of the original family were settled; having dwellings mostly situated upon Main street, with gardens of liberal dimensions attached.

The commercial advantages of this old centre of intercourse, have not been thus far recognised.

CAPT. JOHN WHITTALL MICKLE.

Between Kaighn's Point and Gloucester, a large and (for a long time) well kept farm, brought before the traveller the name of Captain Mickle.

His ancestors were decided members of Friends' Meeting; but if our subject was counted in that communion from birth, he must have "leaped the wall" when quite young; for we find him of the party of the war of 1812.

He chose seafaring as a profession, making various voyages on the Atlantic ocean. And among his adventures there was one connecting him with an attempt to liberate Napoleon Bonaparte from his imprisonment

on the island of St. Helena. This stirring event was never elaborated into intelligible narrative, nor even put upon record by the only one who knew all the facts.

The dethroned emperor died in 1820. How long after that event our captain determined to cast anchor on dry land, and furled his sails permanently, cannot now be ascertained; but more than forty years ago, when Camden was chosen as the southern terminus of the great rail road between Philadelphia and New York, we find him at the front and ready for service.

He chose his permanent residence in the centre of Camden, and became at once active in the great enterprise which thus rolled in upon that hitherto sequestered town almost like the eruption of a volcano. The proposal to make the journey from Philadelphia to New York in the same daylight, sounded like a revival of the dreams of Oliver Evans.

the steam enthusiast of a former age; but the daring of the attempt alone was sufficient to beckon Captain Mickle towards it. Whatever his aspirations may have been as a sailor, he seems to have laid them all aside from this time forward.

In neighborly intercourse he was rather kindly disposed—easily moved at the sorrows of the poor, and comparatively willing to assist in relieving such. In business his manners were ungracious, to say the least; he seemed to speak always as from the quarter-deck, and permitted no appeal from his decisions, allotting neither time nor space for the opinions of others. But his duty, as far as he understood it, was most scrupulously performed; turning back from no proper risk or responsibility.

He admitted his fellowship with the "Free Thinkers;" yet he more than once helped a church with money. Passing as one "with

small belief encumbered," yet he had more than one anchor that never dragged. He believed steadfastly in General Jackson, the Camden and Amboy Rail Road, and the Philadelphia and Camden Ferry Company; and somewhere within the points of this triangle he was always to be found. City, state, and national politics were all driven into this enclosure, like sheep into a fold, and fattened, and fleeced, and slaughtered, according to the demands of the ruling powers there.

This ferry company was charged with the conveyance across the Delaware, of the passengers and freight of the various rail road trains running between Philadelphia and New York. In seasons of severe frost, this was a hard service for the ferry boats of the size then prevalent. The captain had not studied marine architecture in due form; but he planned and superintended the building of the "Dido," a ferry boat which for twenty years surpassed in good service any

other boat on the Delaware. And certainly, as director of the rail road and president of the ferry company, "we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Some seventeen years ago, a small, weak boat (the New Jersey) was burnt on her passage across the river, and a number of persons lost their lives thereby. Both sides of the river condemned the carelessness involved in the catastrophe, and the company was cited by the coroner, and complaint was also lodged in the criminal court of Camden, and Captain Mickle was summoned to the stand.

*Saturday
Nov 22 A. 1871*

He admitted that the unfortunate boat belonged to his company; but he insisted that she was sound and seaworthy in form and in fact; and concluded by averring that "she was a better boat the night she was burnt* than she was the day she was launched!"

** I am not sure if the boat was burnt
at night & as the night the boat was
lost, upon the river the river was quiet
but not the*

This formed rather an advance over anything like legal testimony hitherto offered in New Jersey. However it might bear on the particular case which drew it out, the general conclusion was, that hereafter, if any exigency arose for “swearing a case through a stone wall,” Captain Mickle would be a likely man to lead the way.

But we must not forget that, when there was no such thing as getting a hearty drink of good water in Camden, Captain Mickle sunk an artesian well at his own expense, and made its bright crystal free to all well-behaved comers.

And, more than all—when the stars and the stripes were shot down from Fort Sumter, Captain Mickle presided at the town meeting in Camden, and in his short, blunt address he said—

“The news is, that they have shot down

our flag from the United States fort at South Carolina. Now you see that flag has got to go up again!"

As true a prophet as patriot, let this be his epitaph!

DR. ISAAC S. MULFORD.

In passing up Federal street from the river, standing full a hundred feet from the line of the street, is a large, plain brick mansion. It is the former home, and was for a long time the residence, of Dr. Mulford of Camden. Its style is that of seventy years ago; all its features are harmonious—so much so, that any thoughtful person facing the edifice, will seem to hear or to see an appeal from the past.

Dr. Mulford was brother-in-law to Captain Mickle, but they did not associate much. The former was the opposite, indeed the antipode of the latter; he was silent, thoughtful, and almost austere in aspect. He could

recollect Camden when he might have counted all its commodious houses upon his ten fingers; and he walked along its lengthening streets to the last, with the same deliberate step as he did threescore years ago.

As physician and druggist he must have come in contact with the residents of the whole settlement, and of much of the surrounding country. His pale, unimpassioned face was familiar at almost every bedside; his low, calm voice was that of a friend in need. His long white fingers seemed made to feel the pulse, and in the words of Samuel Johnson, he exhibited "the power of art without the show."

In middle life the Dr. joined the society of Friends, leaving the severe creed of Calvin for the milder one of Fox. But, as Milton said of himself, "I change my sky but not my mind when I cross the sea," so the Dr. carried his coat unchanged in color into the new

fraternity, sitting in meeting and walking by the way as the "Quaker in black."

His practice as a physician was gradually handed over to younger aspirants, and his closing service is that of historian of New Jersey. His patience and faithfulness admirably qualified him for the task, and he has fulfilled every reasonable requirement of the same.

SKETCH OF CAMDEN.

NEW JERSEY.

PART SECOND.

The observant traveller from Europe, (or indeed from any part of the slowly-changing old hemisphere.) who arrives in Chicago, with correct information furnished him of its age and history—will be astonished, if not stunned by the bare evidence laid before his senses. Streets of palaces are there; temples of trade, where Mammon himself seems surfeited; luxurious dwellings, in whose patch of unbuilt garden surface the almost warm footprints of the buffalo and wild hog may be found! The dreams of Aladdin hardened into architectural granite.

Passing to some other prominent points embraced in our web of railways, let our visiter at length roll eastward through Pennsylvania, and after fighting his angular way through Philadelphia's red labyrinth, let him "ferry" himself to Camden, N. J. There he will find a level area, within easy rifle range of the largest territorial city of the world, (and which was once the national capital and still is its true metropolis) with scarcely a safe landing at its Delaware front, and with two-thirds of its surface still covered with sandburrs or spatterdocks! He will find here nearly enough of stagnancy to restore his equilibrium of progress.

If we wonder how some of our western wilds have dashed forward into towns and cities in a few years, we may equally wonder how through a full century Camden has managed to stand still.

Something of an excuse for this sluggish-

ness has been sought in her water boundary, dividing her from the towering city of Penn; but Brooklyn is also water bounded, and her territory is actually an island; she is now, however, determined to have a bridge cost what it may.

But to borrow calm counsel from the most passionate people on earth—"let bygones *be* bygones" in this matter. Leaving the torpor of one hundred and fifty years to bury its own dead, let us see what may be done to-day and to-morrow in the way of sensible advance.

Camden territory is a peninsula of nearly uniform width, bounded principally by the Delaware river and Cooper's creek. The former is one of the finest rivers of this continent, and its widest channel at this spot is on the Camden side. The most extensive improvement on this front is that of the Camden and Amboy Rail Road, and consists

of tracks and stabling for locomotives, and slips for shipment of burden trains. These erections are thus for special use, and present no accommodations to general commerce. Farther south are the wharf and dock of the "Dredging Company," also tied up to special service; and towards Kaighn's Point is the fine property of Starr, Brothers, which is slowly getting into usable condition. The only complete landing (embracing wharves and docks) for general business, is that of Messrs. John F. Starr and Son, at foot of Market street.

The various ferries are not of course public landings, though they are certainly public conveniences of the first order; and the shipyard at Cooper's Point, has also its own restricted functions.

The greater part of the northern front has a fine elevation for dwellings, and should have been kept as a "north end terrace" for

beautiful mansions in harmony with the plan of State street. But good natured "Joe Cooper" sold any one a lot for any thing, and thus its real advantages have been marred.

The eastern boundary is by Cooper's Creek; and this remains, if not rightly appropriated, at least to a great extent unperverted.

This "Creek" would count as quite a river in densely-populated Europe. Its navigable extent must be nearly ten miles. Its course is undeniably "sinuous," but its depth is comparatively uniform and sufficient for floating very heavy freight, with a channel a hundred feet wide. On each side of it are large tracts of fertile meadow, now much neglected, but capable of profitable cultivation by good embankments, or by improvement in other ways.

It is plain that this region marks the ma-

nufacturing front of Camden, where lies undeveloped wealth by millions. Assurances like these are so easily made—these things called “ciphers” so readily fill up a dazzling line, that we offer to try in this closing page to see how far history will fortify our prophecy.

JESSE W. STARR & SONS.

On the right hand bank of this creek, as you travel upwards, may be found the iron works of Jesse W. Starr and Sons. The original plot occupied by this firm contained about eleven acres, and is still the area in actual use; and the changes already developed on this former little truck farm, deserve mention. Sixty years ago its best results might have “fed and clothed” a family of four on this wise. By unremitting labor that hardly noted the flight of time except by the extremes of heat and cold, a fare of rye bread and molasses, mitigated by sweet potatoes and hot-corn, was extorted, and at times ex-

tended to a grudging addition of stringy pork, a portion of which latter was bartered off for linsey woolsey clothing. While at our present view, some *five hundred and fifty* families have a comfortable living out of these same eleven acres!

The firm is composed of Jesse W. Starr, Benjamin A. Starr, and Benjamin F. Archer. The business is that of an extensive Iron Foundry, where some of the largest and many of the best cast iron pipes of the country have been made; using at present six cupola furnaces. The property includes the entire surface of marsh down to the county bridge, where the Camden and Amboy Company have just laid two tracks of rails for the accommodation of these works. The capacity of the whole creek region is fairly indicated in this single instance. Mr. Starr is a thorough master of his business and has devoted his whole energies to its prosecution. In this statement we present merely a literal fact; an iron

one indeed, in all its strength but not with its usual harshness.

Returning from the works, as we cross the Haddonfield road, we come upon a triangular garden embracing the mansion of Mr. J. W. Starr. This garden is enclosed by the finest "live fence" (a hedge of Osage orange) in America, and contains in its seven acres of flowers and fruit enough of peaceful beauty to make any good judge who enters it, say with Sancho Panza, that he fain would stay there longer than he is able!

The entire establishment presents a specimen of American life fit for the severest scrutiny: courageous industry busy to useful ends, radiating from and returning to a comfortable, delightful home. Long may the example and the exemplar remain among us!





WERT
BOOKBINDING
Granville, Pa
MAY - JUNE 1988
We're Quills About

